

Confidence Building Between the DPRK and the U.S.: The Foundation for Settling the Korean Issues

Hyon Song Ri

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Executive Summary

Experts have described the DPRK–U.S. relations as one of two long-time foes. The United States divided the Korean Peninsula by its military occupation. U.S. aggression aimed at stifling the new-born DPRK in its cradle and sit upon the Korean Peninsula as a whole. For the United States, the Korean Peninsula was a showdown site of the Cold War and it enforced a hostile policy to isolate and stifle the DPRK. In the mid-1950s, the United States introduced nuclear weapons into south Korea and by 1980 more than one thousand had been brought in, giving south Korea the biggest nuclear arsenal in the Far East. The nuclear conflict created by the United States in the beginning of the 1990s was a showdown without fire intended to make the DPRK collapse by isolating and stifling it.

The hostile policy of the Bush administration forced the DPRK to acquire its nuclear deterrence. This policy continues unchanged; the “strategic patience” policy of the Obama administration resulted in that the DPRK had to strengthen its nuclear deterrent power both in quality and quantity, which worsened tensions and conflict on and around the Korean Peninsula. All the tragedies and miseries that the Korean people have had to endure stem from the hostile policies of the United States. To build confidence between the DPRK and the United States is to create a shortcut for eliminating their hostile relations. First, a precondition for peaceful resolution of the Korean nuclear issue is to build confidence between the two countries. Second, confidence building between the two countries is of prime importance for ensuring peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and the region.

The hostile relations between the DPRK and the United States have lasted for more than half a century. The two-decade history of DPRK-U.S. talks clearly shows that confidence building is a job easier said than done. Both sides should adhere to the principle of “mutual respect and equality.” Furthermore, the principle of “simultaneous action” should be observed in the effort to build confidence between the DPRK and the U.S. To put an end to the state of war on the basis of these principles and to establish a lasting peace regime on the Korean Peninsula is the only way to accelerate the building of irreversible confidence between the DPRK and the United States.

Introduction

The Korean nation is a homogeneous nation with a brilliant culture that has a history dating back more than 5000 years. This beautiful country has long been suffering from a painful division. The national division was forced on the Korean people by outside forces. It created unbearable hardships and disasters for our nation and continues to produce hostile confrontation and periodically escalated tensions.

At the bottom of this tragedy lie the hostile relations between the DPRK and the United States. These hostile relations have lasted for more than half a century. They are the root cause that have not only hampered the improvement of inter-Korean relations and hindered national reunification, but also jeopardized the peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the region, and subsequently spawned the nuclear issue on the Peninsula.

The modern history of Korea is a history of distrust and conflict between the DPRK and the United States. Only confidence building between the DPRK and the U.S. can be the shortcut to ensure lasting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, solving all entrenched issues and putting an end to the country's division.

The History of DPRK–U.S. Relations Is a History of Confrontation and Distrust

Some experts have described DPRK–U.S. relations as those of two long-time foes. The United States has been responsible for aggression in Korea since the 18th century. It has committed the crime of making the Japanese invade Korea at the end of 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries.

This paper deals with the DPRK–U.S. hostile relations after World War II. The United States was the mastermind when the Korean Peninsula was divided by military occupation.

In August 1945, Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration. It subsequently notified the Allied Powers about its agreement of the surrender. Upon this notification, the United States saw that it was impossible to realize its ambition to dominate the Korean Peninsula through declaring war against Japan. Thus, it devised a strategy for obtaining “the real solution,” aimed at occupying half of the Peninsula.

In accordance with President Harry S. Truman’s scenario, a draft was made to divide the occupied areas that were left by the surrendering Japanese army between the United States and the Soviet Union. The U.S. Department of the Army named the draft “General Order No. 1” and submitted it to Truman, who gave the order to notify the Allied Powers.

The June 1990 issue of the south Korean magazine *Shin-Dong-A* disclosed that if the division on the 38th Parallel and stationing of U.S. army would be just for Japanese disarmament, it could be easier and faster for the Soviet army, which was already down in the 37th Parallel, to go up to Pusan than bringing in the U.S. army, which was 600 miles away. So, the definition of the 38th Parallel as a divide was a political and strategic decision aimed at containing the Soviet army from taking the Korean Peninsula as a whole.

Later, Truman revealed in his *Memoirs* (1955–56) that making the 38th parallel a division line had not been up for international discussion. This proves that the 38th Parallel was wholly created by United States.

On September 2, 1945, the U.S. government ordered General Douglas MacArthur to proclaim that the U.S. army would occupy the Korean

Peninsula south of the 38th parallel. He made such a statement on the U.S. battleship *USS Missouri* when it arrived at Yokohama.

The creation of the 38th Parallel and the occupation of south Korea by the United States were illegal and without any validity in the light of international law.

At the Cairo Conference (1943), President Franklin Roosevelt of the United States, Prime Minister Winston Churchill of the United Kingdom, and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek of the Republic of China recognized “the enslavement of the people of Korea” and declared that they were “determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent.”¹ This position was reconfirmed in the Potsdam Declaration (1945) when the Allied Powers held their last negotiations. It should be noted that there was no single article in those declarations stipulating either “the dividing line for disarmament of Japanese army between the U.S. and the Soviet Union” or the division of Korea.

The United States could not legalize its occupation of south Korea even by the General Order No. 1 issued by the Allied Forces Command, which was produced alone and received the approval of the Soviet Union just before the Japanese defeat.

The General Order No. 1 specified that the stationing of U.S. and Soviet armies on the Korean Peninsula was only for the purpose of disarming the Japanese army. Consequently, this order lost its validity as soon as the disarmament of the Japanese troops was finished. Subsequently, there was no excuse for stationing foreign armies on the Korean Peninsula.

After making the bloodless occupation of the southern part of Korea, the United States realized that the reunified and independent Democratic Korea could become a serious threat to U.S. strategic interests in the Far East, and fabricated a “government” in south Korea, using the UN as a tool. The real intention of the U.S. was to occupy the Korean Peninsula as a whole.

In September 1947, the United States declared that the Korean issue would be submitted to the UN General Assembly, thus discarding the U.S.–Soviet Union Joint Commission.

In the Second Session of the UN General Assembly held on November 14, 1947, when Korea had no representation, a resolution creating the United

¹ “Cairo Declaration,” *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/88555/Cairo-Declaration> (accessed May 24, 2012).

Nations Temporary Commission (UNTCOK) was adopted with U.S. pressure. It was going to supervise the forthcoming "election" in south Korea. On February 19, 1948, the so-called "Little Assembly of the United Nations" was convened and fabricated a "resolution" on conducting a "separate election" in south Korea. Against the desire of the Korean people, the United States forced the "May 10th separate election" to set up a pro-U.S. government in south Korea and put pressure on the UN General Assembly to pass a "resolution" that recognized the "south Korean Government" as "the only legal government of Korea." This "resolution" served as an effective "argument" for the United States to internationalize the Korean War. The Korean division was a logical premise of the U.S. war of aggression against Korea carried out under the cloak of UN. It was a prelude for the outbreak of war.

On June 25, 1950, the United States instigated the army in south Korea to perpetrate a full-scale military invasion into the northern part of Korea. For the Korean people, the war that lasted three years was a just struggle for safeguarding the independence and freedom of their country, frustrating the U.S. aggression aimed at stifling the new-born DPRK in its cradle and occupying the Korean Peninsula as a whole. The United States regarded the Korean Peninsula as a showdown site of the Cold War and enforced a hostile policy to isolate and stifle the DPRK.

After the Korean War, the United States intentionally halted the process of replacing the Armistice Agreement with a peace treaty. In accordance with the Armistice Agreement, a higher-level political conference was to be held within three months to negotiate the ways for peaceful settlement of the Korean issues, including the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Korean Peninsula.²

Therefore, the preparatory meeting for convening a political conference between the DPRK and the United States was held from October 26 to December 12, 1953. Unfortunately, the conference failed to advance because

² According to Paragraph 60 of the Armistice Agreement: "In order to insure the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, the military Commanders of both sides hereby recommend to the governments of the countries concerned on both sides that, within three (3) months after the Armistice Agreement is signed and becomes effective, a political conference of a higher level of both sides be held by representatives appointed respectively to settle through negotiation the questions of the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea, the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, etc." See "Text of the Korean War Armistice Agreement," Findlaw, <http://news.findlaw.com/wp/docs/korea/kwarmagr072753.html> (accessed May 24, 2012).

the U.S. deliberately introduced obstacles during negotiations. It was therefore impossible to settle the Korean issues peacefully, including the issue of replacing the Armistice Agreement with a peace treaty.

Subsequently, the Geneva Conference was held, aimed at reaching a peaceful settlement of the Korean question. Again the United States intentionally sabotaged the conference by obstinately insisting on nonsensical issues such as that the U.S. army could not withdraw from south Korea, that the Chinese army should withdraw from north Korea, that a general election should be held in north Korea since there was a "legal government" in south Korea, etc.

Therefore, the process of change from the Armistice Agreement to the peace treaty miscarried at the initial stage. And the ceasefire has continued for more than half a century on the Korean Peninsula.

The United States was making constant provocations for starting a new war in order to perpetuate its military occupation of south Korea and transform it to the outpost for its strategy of dominating Asia.

First of all, the United States ignored the arrangement in the Armistice Agreement that the foreign forces were going to be withdrawn from the Korean Peninsula. The U.S. created "the U.S.–south Korea Mutual Defense Treaty" on October 1, 1953, which it claimed had "legalized" the U.S. army's perpetual occupation of south Korea.

Furthermore, it overruled the issues of the Armistice Agreement on prohibiting the introduction of military equipments to the Korean Peninsula, and introduced all kinds of military technology on a large scale. From the mid-1950s, the United States even started to introduce nuclear weapons.³ By 1980, more than 1,000 nuclear devices were stored in south Korea, which made it the biggest nuclear arsenal in the Far East.

The United States constantly perpetrated military provocations and exercises for aggression against the DPRK. On January 23, 1968, the U.S. spy ship *Pueblo* was seized by the Korean People's Army (KPA) while it was involved in espionage activities deep inside DPRK territorial waters. Taking this incident as a pretext, the United States deployed three aircraft carriers

³ See Lee Jae-Bong, "U.S. Deployment of Nuclear Weapons in 1950s: south Korea & north Korea's Nuclear Development: Toward the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 8-3-09, http://japanfocus.org/-Lee-Jae_Bong/3053 (accessed May 24, 2012).

and more than 1,000 fighter aircraft around the Korean Peninsula in order to threaten and blackmail the DPRK, driving the situation to the brink of war.

On April 15, 1968, when a U.S. EC-121 reconnaissance plane intruded into the DPRK's territorial airspace to perpetrate a criminal act of espionage, and was shot down by a KPA fighter aircraft, the United States was crying out for retaliation, distorting the facts as if the plane had been shot down during "legal reconnaissance activities" in the "high sea air."

The reckless military provocations against the DPRK by the United States amounted to over 23,800 in 1974 and more than 28,150 in 1975. Only from January to July 1976, the hostile activities carried out by the United States in the Panmunjom Joint Security Area amounted to more than 400.

On August 18, 1976, the Ford administration in a premeditated act provoked the so-called Hatchet Incident in the Panmunjom Joint Security Area, and aggravated the situation on the Korean Peninsula by reinforcing its military equipment on a large scale.

The United States continued to escalate the threat of nuclear war against the DPRK. A typical example was the Team Spirit Joint Military Exercise, which has taken place every year from 1976. At that time, the United States mobilized 15,000–19,000 troops for a NATO military exercise, but threw in more than 200,000 troops including 60,000–70,000 U.S. troops into this joint military exercise. Further, more than 70 battleships and 2,000 military aircrafts were mobilized, including three infantry divisions, a marine division, detached squadron of aircraft carrier, landing crafts group, strategic bomber, fighter-bomber, attack plane corps, etc.

In a nutshell, the U.S. hostile policy against the DPRK during the Cold War boiled down to constant threat and blackmail that perpetuated Korea's division. In the post-Cold War period, the United States viciously enforced its hostile policy to isolate and stifle the DPRK.

The fierce showdown during the Cold War between the socialist and capitalist camps was reduced in the post-Cold War period into a struggle between the DPRK and the United States. The U.S., puffed up by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the East European Socialist camp, began to talk of a "system collapse" in the DPRK.

The nuclear dispute created by the United States at the beginning of the 1990s was a showdown without fire aimed at bringing about collapse of the DPRK by isolating and stifling it.

The United States invented the problem of the so-called “inconsistencies with the initial report on the nuclear material.” It insisted that the DPRK had hidden plutonium produced in the 5-MW graphite-moderated reactor in Nyongbyon before the nuclear safeguard agreement with IAEA had been concluded. It tried to impose “ad hoc inspections” on the DPRK.

The ad hoc inspection on two military objects of the DPRK was to trample down the dignity and sovereignty of the DPRK and disarm it. So, it could by no means be admitted. Consequently, the DPRK could do nothing but leave the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and pushed forward the process of expansion and perfection of the country’s independent nuclear energy industries.

Flustered by the self-defensive measures of the DPRK, the United States had to participate in discussions with the DPRK. In June 1993, the DPRK and the United States held governmental-level talks for the first time, and in October 1994, the historic DPRK–U.S. Agreed Framework was signed.

According to the Agreed Framework, the United States assured that it was going to respect the sovereignty of the DPRK and would provide two light water reactors in return for the DPRK freezing and eventually dismantling its nuclear facilities in Nyongbyon. The subsequent developments of DPRK–U.S. relations, however, demonstrated clearly that the United States had no real intention to provide the light water reactors but only tried to wait out the DPRK’s “collapse.”

The George W. Bush administration, which came into power in 2001, created a new nuclear crisis by talking about “suspicions” that the DPRK had “highly enriched uranium” and enforced an unprecedented hostile policy towards the DPRK. The Bush administration, whose ideological stand was neo-conservatism aimed at controlling the world by force, tried to tackle the Korean Peninsula issue by force instead of through talks and negotiations and escalated its policy of isolation, oppression, threat and blackmail against the DPRK.

They schemed for “the overthrow of the DPRK government” by increasing the military threat and expanding economic sanctions and pressures, identifying the DPRK as a part of “the Axis of Evil,” “the outpost of tyranny,” “the object for preemptive nuclear attack,” etc. At the same time, it attempted to justify its hostile policy by producing totally groundless charges such as that the DPRK was “a sponsor of terrorism,” “proliferating

weapons of mass destruction,” and involved in human rights suppression, money laundering, counterfeit money, drug smuggling, etc.

The Bush administration’s eight years of hostile policy forced the DPRK to acquire a nuclear deterrence in order to defend itself in light of the aggravated U.S. nuclear threat and hostility.

The U.S. hostile policy continues unchanged. The Obama administration launched its policy of “strategic patience,” which worsened tension and conflict on and around the Korean Peninsula. Combining dialogue and pressure, the DPRK was going to be brought down to its knees. The U.S.’s new policy obliged the DPRK to strengthen its nuclear deterrent capabilities both in quality and quantity.

At last, the United States recognized that its policy of “strategic patience” had failed and took the initiative for high level DPRK–U.S. dialogue.

The subsequent result of three rounds of high-level conversations between DPRK and the United States, held from July 2011 to March 2012, was the agreement of February 29. To this end, the United States assured that it did not intend to be hostile to the DPRK and would respect its sovereignty. The U.S. committed itself to take measures for normalizing the bilateral relations. Both countries have agreed to take confidence-building measures. Despite this agreement, the United States unfairly took issue with the DPRK scientific satellite launch, making the fraudulent use of UN Security Council to prohibit the DPRK’s legal rights to launch a satellite. Consequently, the DPRK–U.S. agreement of February 29 was a dead letter and far from implementation.

The DPRK opened the process of pursuing a peaceful satellite launch. Despite this, the United States led a “denunciation” campaign, claiming that it was a “long-range missile launch.” The true intention of the U.S. is not only to stop the DPRK from strengthening its defense capacity, but also to obstruct its peaceful development. This proves that the U.S. harbors negative feelings towards the socialist system of the Korean people and is involved in a hostile policy to isolate and stifle the Korean system. The fact is that this stance has not shifted over the years.

The Necessity of Confidence Building Between the DPRK and the United States

Today, the situation on the Korean Peninsula – a legacy of the Cold War – remains unchanged. Korea is a hot spot, where the risk of war is great. Over the past 20 years, the Korean nuclear issue has been in the international spotlight. As mentioned above, all the tragedies and miseries that plague the Korean people stem from the hostile U.S. policy towards the DPRK. There are three important aspects when it comes to these hostile relations. Technically, the two countries are at war against each other. The hostile relations between the DPRK and the United States are the longest of its kind in the history of the U.S. These relations evince an asymmetric confrontation by which a big nation brings maximum political, military and economic pressure to bear on a small nation. To build confidence between the DPRK and the United States is to create a shortcut for the elimination of the hostile relations.

First, building confidence between the two countries is a precondition for a peaceful resolution of the Korean nuclear issue. This issue stems from the hostile policy and nuclear threat of the U.S. against the DPRK. It is an issue that cannot be resolved without building confidence.

The U.S. tries to mislead public opinion, acting as if the hostile relations stem from the DPRK's nuclear deterrence. However, to understand the essence of the Korean nuclear issue and find the right approach for tackling this issue, it is fundamentally important to have a clear understanding of the origin and root cause of why there are nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula.

No nation in the world has been exposed to the nuclear threat so directly and for so long as the Korean nation. As far as it is concerned, the threat posed by nuclear weapons is not an abstract notion but a very serious practical problem as well as an alarming concrete experience. Koreans suffered from the U.S. nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The death toll of Koreans from these attacks was the second largest, surpassed only by Japanese losses.

Since Koreans had already had a first-hand experience of the calamities caused by atomic bombs, the nuclear blackmail by the United States during the Korean War was perceived as a nightmare. On November 30, 1950, U.S. President Harry S. Truman made a statement about the use of atomic bombs in the war. The next day, an order was issued to the U.S. Strategic Air Command, requesting bombers on stand-by for an immediate atomic attack in the Far East. In December 1950, General Douglas McArthur, who was the Commander of the U.S. Forces in the Far East, made a saber-rattling remark, saying that a “radioactive corridor will be set up in the northern part of Korea covering the area between the east coast and the west coast. No living thing will be found in this area for 60 or 120 years.”⁴

This nuclear blackmail used against the DPRK resulted in the mass exodus of “atom bomb-driven refugees” from the north to the south. Many families found it impossible to move to the south but had their husbands or sons take refuge in the south in order to preserve the family line. Millions of families were scattered and now live separated in the north and south.

It was the United States that first brought nuclear weapons into Korea. In the latter half of the 1950s, the rise of anti-nuclear movement in Japan became a threat to the existence of the pro-U.S. government.⁵ In an attempt to buttress the Japanese government, the U.S. transferred nuclear weapons from Japan to south Korea. In 1957, the first batch of tactical nuclear weapons that the U.S. had deployed in Japan was brought into south Korea. It meant that Japan was “denuclearized” by the U.S. at the sacrifice of Korea. Since then, the number of nuclear weapons that the U.S. has deployed in south Korea has steadily increased. In the mid-1970s, there were more than 1,000 U.S. nuclear weapons in south Korea.⁶

Since the late 1960s, the United States began to stage joint military exercises with south Korea for the purpose of training its forces in the use of nuclear weapons for an actual war of aggression against the DPRK. In 1969,

⁴ “U.S. Planned to A-Bomb N. Korea in 1950”, see http://b-29s-over-korea.com/NorthKorea-A-Bomb/US-Planned-To-A-Bomb-N-Korea-In-1950-War_02.html (accessed May 24, 2012).

⁵ U. S. Department of State, “Addendum INR Contribution to NIE 4-65 Likelihood of Further Nuclear Proliferation,” November 4, 1965, The National Security Archive, www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB155/prolif-11b.pdf (accessed May 24, 2012).

⁶ Chae Il Chul, “Leftovers of Cold War Should Be Removed,” *Rodong shinmun*, February 27, 2012, http://www.rodong.rep.kp/InterEn/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2012-02-27-0014&chAction=L (accessed May 24, 2012).

the first U.S.–south Korea joint military exercise for nuclear war, labeled Operation Focus Retina, was staged. Since then, for more than 40 years, joint military exercises for nuclear war have been conducted annually under various titles such as Freedom Vault, Team Spirit, Key Resolve, Foal Eagle, Ulji Freedom Guardian, etc.

As a result, the postwar generation in north Korea has had to live under the threat that the U.S. will use nuclear weapons, deployed in south Korea, for actions targeting the DPRK; people in north Korea have had to spend their life exposed to the danger of a nuclear war. This has been the grim reality of the Korean Peninsula.

Three Phases of DPRK Policy

The efforts of the government of the DPRK aimed at removing the nuclear threat posed by the United States have gone through three distinct phases. In the first phase, the DPRK endeavored to eliminate the U.S. nuclear threat by establishing a nuclear-free zone through peaceful dialogue and negotiations.

In 1959, the government of the DPRK proposed that an atomic weapons free peace zone should be established in Asia; in 1981, it proposed the creation of a nuclear-free zone in Northeast Asia; and in 1986, it proposed the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

On January 10, 1984, the government of the DPRK offered to include south Korean officials in DPRK–U.S. talks aimed at removing the danger of nuclear war. Two years later, on June 23, 1986, the DPRK released a statement solemnly declaring that it would not test, produce, store, or bring in nuclear weapons, would not tolerate installation of any foreign military bases including bases for nuclear weapons, and would not allow the passage of foreign nuclear weapons through its territorial land, air and waters. However, the United States turned a blind eye to these efforts to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula and increased its nuclear threat against the DPRK.

In the second phase of the efforts, the government of the DPRK strengthened its efforts to eliminate the nuclear threat that was posed by the U.S. by relying on international law. In 1978, the United States, the Soviet Union and the UK announced a statement on “negative security assurance,” stating that they would not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states that were parties to the NPT. The government of the DPRK acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in December 1985 in an expectation that this would help remove the nuclear threat against the DPRK posed by the U.S.

When the United States promised to suspend the series of Team Spirit joint military exercise for nuclear war, pursuant to relevant provisions of the NPT, the DPRK actively cooperated with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in six ad hoc inspections carried out from May 1992 to February 1993. However, the U.S. began to talk about “the suspicion on nuclear development” even before the completion of these ad hoc inspections and rigged the “Resolution on Special Inspection” that targeted not only nuclear

facilities but also DPRK military installations that were of a sensitive nature, instigating foul forces within the IAEA.

The real nature of the inspections was clearly revealed later in Iraq. The U.S. did not hesitate to search even the Iraqi presidential palace under the pretext that they were pursuing “inspections” and later fabricated “information” about the existence of weapons of mass destruction, only to use it as an excuse of war against Iraq. It was proved at a later point that the “information” about the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq was completely false. However, it was too late. Iraq, as a nation, had already been ruined and soaked in blood.

In an attempt to force “a special inspection” within the DPRK, the United States openly threatened the DPRK with nuclear weapons, resuming the series of Team Spirit joint military exercises that had been temporarily suspended. In the long run, even invoking international law could not hinder the arbitrary acts of the United States. To make matters worse, it made clear that international law had been abused as a tool to justify U.S. high-handedness.

On March 12, 1993, the DPRK declared that, pursuant to Article 10 of the NPT, it would withdraw from the treaty in order to safeguard its national sovereignty and security and duly notified its decision to the depositories of the NPT.⁷ The government of the DPRK took unilateral measures to temporarily suspend the entry into force of its decision to withdraw from the NPT as the United States agreed to hold talks with the DPRK.

The DPRK–U.S. Agreed Framework was signed on October 21, 1994, in the days of the Clinton administration. However, the Bush administration that came into power later unilaterally scrapped the Agreed Framework. In his State of the Union Address on January 30, 2002, President Bush even accused the DPRK of being a part of “an Axis of Evil.” That the country with the world’s largest nuclear arsenal disclosed such hostility demonstrated that the DPRK was under a serious nuclear threat. In March the same year, the U.S. included the DPRK on its list of “Targets for Nuclear Pre-emptive

⁷ Article X of the NPT states: “Each Party shall in exercising its national sovereignty have the right to withdraw from the Treaty if it decides that extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Treaty, have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country.” *The Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)*, <http://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2005/npttreaty.htm> (accessed May 24, 2012).

Strike.”⁸ It threatened the security of the DPRK, making calamities of a nuclear war loom large over the DPRK.

By this point, it was clear that all the efforts of the DPRK had failed, be it through dialogue or reliance on international law. The unique conditions of the Korean Peninsula called for a unique solution. The only choice left for the DPRK was to counter the threat of nuclear weapons with nuclear weapons. In short, the extreme nuclear threat posed by the United States forced the DPRK to go nuclear.

On January 10, 2003, the government of the DPRK took a resolute self-defense measure by lifting the moratorium that had been effective for ten years by deciding to withdraw from the NPT. No longer bound by the NPT, the DPRK changed its policy on an utterly legitimate basis by weaponizing the entire portion of plutonium extracted from the pilot nuclear power station that had been generating electricity. Three years after its withdrawal from the NPT, the DPRK conducted in October 2006 its first nuclear test, which was followed by the second test in May 2009.

Therefore, an end was put to the nuclear imbalance in Northeast Asia, where the DPRK had been the only country that neither had nuclear weapons nor was protected by a nuclear umbrella. Thanks to the deterrent effect resulting from its possession of nuclear weapons, the risk of war on the Korean Peninsula was reduced considerably. This is the current effort of the DPRK – that is, the efforts to remove the nuclear threat by countering U.S. nuclear weapons with DPRK’s nuclear weapons instead of mere verbal appeals.

It is impossible to bring down the thick wall of mistrust and confrontation that separates the DPRK and the United States in an instant. Instead, the right order is to begin with the building of confidence. A resolution on the nuclear issue without building confidence between the two nations is impossible. The process of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula has suffered repeated frustration and failure. To place it back on the right track, the DPRK and the United States – the key parties to the nuclear issue – should build confidence and give priority to it. Furthermore, the building of

⁸ Michael D. Intriligator, “US Nuclear Weapons Policy Under the Bush Administration,” a presentation to the GRAD Conference on “Regional Cooperation and Global Security,” International Business School, Budapest, June 30–July 4, 2004, http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2004/07/00_intriligator_us-policy-bush.htm (accessed May 28, 2012).

confidence between the DPRK and the United States is of prime significance in the efforts to ensure peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and the region. Historically, the U.S. refused to co-exist peacefully with the DPRK and sought to perpetuate the division of the Korean Peninsula by clinging to its hostile policy of military confrontation and exacerbating tension, thus justifying its military presence on the Korean Peninsula and in the region.

Division continues on the Korean Peninsula despite the responsible and patient efforts of the DPRK and the desire of the nation for national reunification. It is because of the anti-national and anti-reunification move of the pro-U.S. flunkeyist elements that live as parasites on the hostile relations between the DPRK and the United States that this division of the nation continues. Successive south Korean rulers have clung to this policy and maintained their existence by supporting the hostile U.S. policy towards the DPRK.

The hostile relations between the DPRK and the United States have always been at the root of the inter-Korean confrontation and mounting tension. However, the end of the Cold War stripped the U.S. of the excuse for its military presence in south Korea and the region. The U.S. tried to find a way out of the problem by senselessly exaggerating the so-called "threat of north Korea."

It is an old trick of the United States to capitalize on the "military threat" said to be posed by the DPRK in order to justify the U.S. military presence and beefing up of its forces on the Peninsula and in the region. A typical example is the incident concerning the sinking of the south Korean warship *Cheonan* in 2010. The United States not only fabricated the incident but also hastened to launch a campaign to put the blame on the DPRK. The U.S. capitalized on this incident in order to defer the transfer of wartime operational command responsibilities to the south Korean military that was due to take place in 2015 and to create an agreement to maintain its military bases on Okinawa, Japan. At the same time, the U.S. increased its forces in south Korea and the region by beating the war drum. Its aspiration was to maintain military supremacy in the region.

In short, the hostile relations between the DPRK and the United States abetted inter-Korean confrontation and exacerbated military tension in the region. Unless the two countries' hostile relations are transformed into

relations of confidence, it is impossible to ensure peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the region.

The Principle and Process of the Confidence Building Between DPRK and the United States

The hostile relations between the DPRK and the United States have lasted for more than half a century. Twenty years of talks between the two countries shows clearly that building confidence is easier said than done. To achieve this, both sides should adhere to the principle of “mutual respect and equality.”

The spirit that runs through the key agreements that were reached in the talks during the Clinton administration, followed by the Bush and Obama administrations, is the spirit of “mutual respect and equality.” In the DPRK–U.S. Joint Communiqué (2000)⁹ and the DPRK–U.S. Joint Statement (1993)¹⁰ that were concluded and issued during the Clinton administration, both sides stated that they shall “respect each other’s sovereignty.”

In the September 19, Joint Statement 2005,¹¹ issued in the days of the Bush administration, the spirit of “mutual respect and equality” can be identified as being the core idea.

In the February 29, DPRK–U.S. Agreement 2012,¹² the Obama administration stated: “The United States reaffirms that it does not have hostile intent toward the DPRK and is prepared to take steps to improve our bilateral relationship in the spirit of mutual respect for sovereignty and equality.” The U.S. violated all these agreements, however. It has engaged in the chronic bad practice of breaking promises made by the previous administration. The U.S. talks a lot about “mutual respect and equality” but, in fact, regards the DPRK with hostility. One example of this is that less than a month after the U.S. had reaffirmed that it would respect the DPRK’s sovereignty

⁹ State Department, “DPRK Briefing Book: DPRK-US Joint Communiqué,” October 12, 2000, <http://nautilus.org/publications/books/dprkbb/uspolicy/dprk-briefing-book-dprk-us-joint-communicue/> (accessed May 28, 2012).

¹⁰ “Resource Material: 1993 DPRK-US Joint Statement,” The People’s Korea, http://www1.korea-np.co.jp/pk/011th_issue/97100102.htm (accessed May 24, 2012).

¹¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, “Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks,” Beijing, September 19, 2005, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t212707.htm> (accessed May 24, 2012).

¹² U.S. Department of State, “U.S.-DPRK Bilateral Discussions,” February 29, 2012, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/02/184869.htm> (accessed May 24, 2012).

and no longer regard it with hostility, the Obama administration claimed that the DPRK's peaceful space launch was a "long-range missile launch" and made vicious confrontational moves.

The United States took the DPRK's peaceful space launch as a test of a long-range missile simply because the U.S. regards every move made by the DPRK with hostility. It tries to force the DPRK not to do what many other countries are involved in, i.e. launching satellites.

To build confidence without mutual respect and equality is merely empty talk. The principle of "simultaneous action" should be observed in the efforts to build confidence between the DPRK and the United States. In the past, the two countries concluded a number of agreements with a view of building mutual confidence; however, these agreements were not implemented because the principle of "simultaneous action" was not observed properly.

The U.S. always talks about the need for the building of confidence, but always makes the unreasonable request that the DPRK should make the first move. A good example is the demand "Give up nuclear weapons first" and "Take steps for denuclearization first," that the U.S. has frequently asked for. The DPRK and the U.S. have drawn daggers; the two are technically at war against each other. To ask the other party to make the first move will reinforce mistrust instead of confidence.

Ted Carpenter, a senior fellow at the Cato Research Institute (a U.S. institute), has recently published an article in the *China Daily* that supported the unreality and uselessness of the U.S. policy toward the DPRK. He claimed that the Obama administration has created greater risk for negative outcomes. A new, radically different approach was needed instead of continuing the futile strategy of isolating north Korea. Washington should adopt a comprehensive strategy in order to normalize relation with Pyongyang. He also insisted that the most important step would be to change the atmosphere of unrelenting hostility between the two countries, and in effort to reduce tensions the Obama administration should offer to sign a non-aggression pact with north Korea. U.S. leaders should also propose a peace treaty formally ending the armed hostilities on the Korean Peninsula.¹³

¹³ Ted Galen Carpenter, "Time for US to normalize ties with Pyongyang," *China Daily*, May 11, 2012, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/weekly/2012-05/11/content_15265324.htm (accessed May 24, 2012).

The most important way to build confidence between the DPRK and the United States is to sign a peace treaty to put an end to the war that lies at the root of the hostile relations. As long as the parties concerned aim guns at one another, mistrust is an unavoidable consequence and no effort to build confidence can be expected. The only way to accelerate the building of lasting confidence between the DPRK and the U.S. is to put an end to the state of war between two countries. This confidence must be predicated on the principles of “mutual respect and equality” and “simultaneous action.” Only then can an enduring peace on the Korean Peninsula be created.

Concluding Remarks

The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is the goal of the policy that has been consistently pursued by the DPRK with the view of contributing to peace and security in Northeast Asia and the denuclearization of the world. It was thanks to the sincere efforts of the DPRK since the 1990s for denuclearizing the Peninsula that such important bilateral and multilateral agreements such as the DPRK-U.S. Agreed Framework and the September 19 Joint Statement were adopted.

Unfortunately, the implementation of these agreements have been halted. Subsequently, nuclear deterrents have been a response to an increased nuclear threat on the Korean Peninsula. Extreme encroachment upon the sovereignty of the DPRK by taking issue with its recent satellite launch made necessary a nuclear test as a self-defensive countermeasure. The resultant sanctions caused such a vicious cycle of distrust that the Six-Party Talks collapsed after having witnessed repeated frustrations and failures. This proves that the Korean issues can never be settled without confidence among the parties concerned. Still today the talks remain blocked by the barrier of distrust that sanctions against the DPRK constitute. This leads to the conclusion that in order to bring back the process for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, it is necessary to pay primary attention to building confidence between the DPRK and the United States – the parties that have the main responsibility for the existence of the Korean nuclear issue. Practical experience proves that pushing denuclearization in the absence of confidence is just like building a house without a foundation. The DPRK's proposal for establishing a peace treaty will attempt to finally put an end to the vicious cycle of distrust and build confidence to push forward denuclearization. If the concerned parties are able to agree on such a treaty, this will be a key starting point for confidence building.

About the Author

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